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UBC TO ACCESS CANADA'S BIGGEST SCIENTIFIC PROJECT

VANCOUVER – The Province is investing more than $7 million to support two UBC research projects that will be carried out through the facilities of Canadian Light Source, Canada's national synchrotron research facility, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

The two projects, titled High Throughput Macromolecular Crystallography Beamline and the Resonant Elastic and Inelastic Soft X-Ray Scattering, will allow more than 50 research groups from academic, government and industrial sectors to use synchrotron light for research.

Synchrotron radiation has been used by biomedical researchers to develop new medications, by materials scientists to improve lubricants in spacecraft and by mining companies to reduce the toxicity of their tailings.

The synchrotron functions like an enormous spotlight, shining a light on experimental samples that is millions of times brighter than sunlight. This extremely bright light is produced by using powerful magnets and radio frequency waves to accelerate electrons to nearly the speed of light. Infrared, ultraviolet and X-ray light is shone down beamlines to endstations (small laboratories) where scientists can select different parts of the spectrum to "see" the microscopic nature of matter, right down to the level of the atom.

"Access to the Canadian Light Source will allow internationally acclaimed scientists and researchers to conduct leading edge research," Coell said. "With this funding, they will have the tools and the skills to make significant breakthroughs that will benefit British Columbia in the coming years."

About the size of a football field, the Canadian Light Source (CLS) is one of the largest and most expensive scientific projects in Canadian history.

Provincial funding will allow construction of a new insertion device beamline and end station plus a second end station for soft x-ray emission spectroscopy that will allow remote access of experiments via a secure internet connection.

Having their own beamlines and endstations will give B.C. researchers the capability to do cutting-edge scientific research. They will also have access to all of the other beamlines and end stations on a shared basis.

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"Today's announcement will help our researchers access this wonderful international facility in Saskatchewan," says Professor Toope, UBC president. "In addition to extending our research reach across the country, this investment will encourage partnerships between institutions, government agencies and the private sector."

Since 2001, a total of 530 projects and over $329 million in funding have been approved by the provincial government under the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund. This funding has leveraged over $353 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and another $273 million from other non-provincial government sources, for a total investment in British Columbia's research infrastructure of almost $956 million.

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